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ABSTRACT

This document describes a university course designed to provide an historical understanding of Latin America through feature films. The booklet contains an introductory essay on the teaching of a film course on Latin America, a general discussion of strengths and weaknesses of student analyses of films, and nine analyses written by students during the course. The course structure included introductory sessions focusing on characteristic elements of film interpretation. After viewing one film each week, students wrote six-page analytic essays and met for discussions with experts in the field. Some films used in the course were "The Hour of the Furnace" (1968), an Argentine documentary; Bunuel's "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and the Damned," 1951) depicting life in a Mexico City slum; and Dos Santos' "Vidas Secas" ("Barren Lives," 1963), illustrating rural poverty. Films from Peru and Brazil were also included. Weaknesses in student film analyses included simplistic interpretations, summary rather than analysis, and under- or over-emphasis on cinematic techniques. The authors suggest methods for course improvement and conclude that students who took the course not only learned about Latin America but also increased their film literacy skills. (KC)

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LATIN AMERICA: A FILMIC APPROACH

By
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Carlos E. Cortés
Robert Pinger

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM
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This publication is a product of the course, "The Latin American Experience: A Film Survey," which was given during the Spring quarter, 1975, by Professors Leon G. Campbell and Carlos E. Cortes of the Department of History, University of California, Riverside, with the assistance of Robert Pinger, student at UCR, and Constance Young, History Department secretary. The course was supported by a University of California Innovative Projects in University Instruction Grant for 1974-1975. This booklet contains an introductory essay on the teaching of a film course on Latin America, a general discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of student film analyses, and nine selected student film analyses which were written during the course. It is our hope that this publication will prove useful both for teachers who plan to use films in future Latin American courses and for teachers who present courses in the general area of Film and History.

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INTRODUCTION TO A FILMIC APPROACH TO LATIN AMERICA

by Leon G. Campbell and Carlos E. Cortés

Since the inception of the teaching of history in the United States, historians have generally relied on the traditional format of lectures, readings, and class discussions in an effort to help students better understand the past. In recent years, however, historians and members of other disciplines have begun to explore the use of film as a means of teaching history.[1] Today over fifty colleges and universities across the nation offer over 300 history courses which use film as one of the principal documents for study.[2]

Increasing numbers of historians are coming to the conclusion that film has an unsurpassed capacity for describing and revealing an area, period, and subject. Further, it reflects the times in which it was made as well as the views of the people who made it.[3] Archivist Christopher Roads shares this belief, noting that film alone comes near to recreating the past so that the present generation can share the experiences of previous generations, and, in sharing those experiences, can begin to see problems in their contemporary context.[4]

Other factors argue for a wider use of film to teach history, such as changing student perceptions of the goals of a university education, dissatisfaction among both students and faculty with the limitations of traditional course content, the recent wave of concern among students for greater social significance in instruction at every academic level, and declining course enrollments in traditional history courses. Some have suggested that today's student is a member of the "media generation"–more conversant with a television set than a textbook–who can, therefore, learn more effectively from visual language than from written language alone.[5]

Ours is an age of visual media. People derive more and more of what they "know" from television, from movies, from advertising, and from other such sources. Whether watching a television newscast or a feature film, people derive "information," beliefs, and attitudes about their society and other nations. With this in mind, it becomes incumbent upon educators to help prepare students for a life in which they are capable of using the messages that flow from the media rather than being manipulated by these messages. Yet there is no place in the educational curriculum where students receive training in "media literacy."

In their book, *Teaching History with Film*, John E. O'Connor and Martin A. Jackson make the following two observations:

> One cannot intelligently comprehend the written word unless he understands the basic grammar and idiom of the language; the same is true for the cinematic form. We live in a world where more and more everyday information is drawn from the visual media; the tremendous impact of television on our society hardly needs re-emphasizing. But most students and many teachers lack the rudimentary skills needed to evaluate the visual message intelligently.

> Students must learn to apply these same kinds of critical skills to the messages they receive through film and the electronic media; they must not restrict such evaluation to the written word alone. The need for critical evaluation of visual material is even more important as "the news" on television replaces the morning paper as the public's basic source of information on current events.[6]

We do not view the filmic approach of our course—"Latin America: A Film Survey"—as a substitute for traditional course work. The validity of the traditional classroom format, where professors discuss subjects of common knowledge with students who have read assigned materials on the topic, is an inherent and deeply-rooted part of the educational process. Moreover, many films are of little value for studying history, while the use of films in teaching is restricted by the tendency of students to react to all forms of visual media uncritically, to engage in film-going as a passive experience, and to regard films as merely a form of entertainment rather than as an intellectual challenge. Finally, there is considerable controversy among educators themselves regarding the ways to use film in an academic setting.[7]

Due to the paucity of data on the subject of films as instructional aids in teaching history, we made certain decisions designed to minimize the pedagogical problems presented by the use of films. First, we decided to utilize mainly feature-length films dealing with Latin America; we presented only a few documentaries, as this genre had been shown to be less satisfactory in other university-level film and history courses.[8] Our decision was facilitated by the increasing quality of a new generation of Latin American filmmakers as intellectuals and social critics, especially those in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and Cuba.[9] In addition, feature films allowed us to explore the themes of poverty, dependency, and despair, as experienced by many Latin Americans, in a graphic and dramatic fashion. Not only were the available feature films technically superior to most documentaries, they also enabled us to treat topics and social problems which we considered to be crucial to an understanding of contemporary Latin America.[10]

We decided to use feature films as the central, rather than as a supplementary, part of the course—to have them assume the function traditionally reserved for books. Although aware of the limitation of films as primary source materials, we believed that they could be used as springboards to present and discuss historical events, trends, and ideas. We felt that carefully-selected films could convey much about Latin America and do so with considerable force, since films arouse a stronger response than do must lectures or textual readings and leave a correspondingly stronger impression.

By establishing feature films as the primary focus of the course, we indicated to the students our belief in their utility and asked them to view the films with an analytical seriousness which they did not usually apply to the bulk of media presentations to which they were normally exposed. Yet we were aware that courses using film often failed to provide students with the conceptual framework and methodological tools for understanding films as documents. Films merely became surrogates for analysis and discussion, leaving students at once stimulated and confused. As William Hughes noted:

> To date we have few theoretical analyses or practical examples to guide us in using film as evidence. The standard handbooks and research guides offer little or no help, so the isolated historian who would venture to use motion picture sources is faced with the problem of validating a distinctive methodology. Understandably, few historians have shown a willingness to undertake such a methodology.[11]

We feel that, as a conceptual framework, there are three basic realities which students and teachers must grasp in order to effectively analyze and evaluate films as historical evidence. Without an understanding of and an ability to retain a constant working awareness of these realities, the viewer's capacity to use films effectively is severely limited.[12]

Reality Number One–a film does not tell us or give us information about a society; it merely tells us what the filmmaker wants us to believe about that society or provides us perspectives that the filmmaker wants us to receive. By the juxtaposition of words, music, and images, filmmakers hope to convince us that their interpretations of a society or of historical phenomena are the correct ones. To be properly analytical, viewers must approach films with the same awareness which they would use in approaching any written source which purports to "tell about" a society. All sources–whether written or visual–reflect the creator (author or filmmaker) as well as the subject matter upon which the creator is working.

Reality Number Two–a written document is static and one-dimensional (visual); a film is dynamic and influences the viewer on two levels (visual and aural–a constantly moving combination of sight and sound). Students trained in the analysis of written communications are not automatically prepared to deal analytically with film, where the flows of words, sounds, and images are carefully juxtaposed by the filmmaker in an attempt to achieve a preconceived impact. Documentary films provide particular problems in that images and sound track are independent, though coordinated, entities.[13] In contrast to a film in which the viewer can see the person on the screen talk (of course, the voice may be dubbed), the documentary usually contains large passages (sometimes the entire film) in which a stream of images is coordinated with narrative and music–and it is this combination which drives home the message. The same images with a variety of narratives would result in drastically different films; the same narrative coordinated with different streams of images also would produce different effects. Yet it is difficult for the "filmic illiterate" to understand this process and the filmmaker's use of these techniques in manipulating the viewer, unless the viewer has learned how to understand and analyze this specialized language of communication–including its potential for influencing and manipulating an audience.

Reality Number Three–the film itself is only part of the film experience; the viewer is another critical aspect of this complex process. The filmmaker *says* (or tries to say) one thing; what enters into each viewer's mind will vary with the individual, depending on the individual's experience, beliefs, and capacity to "understand" and analyze the film. The same film may have widely varying effects on members of an audience. The variable is not the film; it is the audience. Students must become aware how they bring their pasts to the viewing experience, leaving

themselves more susceptible to the messages and influences of some films than to others. Without this self-awareness, film viewing is simply an exercise in saying "right on" to films which coincide with the individual viewer's beliefs or values and rejecting those films which conflict with one's opinions or predispositions. In this way films become less sources of evidence than manipulators, reinforcements, or challenges to beliefs and prejudices–which they are now for most viewers. One goal of our course was to help increase the students' capacity to identify a filmmaker's position and to analyze a film's techniques for stating that position–no matter whether or not the students agreed with the film's message or point of view.

To help develop student awareness of these three conceptual realities and skills of film analysis, we held a series of introductory sessions structured around the topic of how a filmmaker uses film to make a public statement and tries to influence the thinking of the viewer. As one of us (Carlos Cortés) had made a documentary film–*Northwest from Tumacácori* (1972), a film re-creation of the 1775-1776 expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza which resulted in the founding of San Francisco–we began with the showing and classroom analysis of that film. Next, we showed and discussed a series of cartoons, illustrating how the viewer's mind attaches a "reality" to objects which appear on the screen, and the biographical film, *Satyajit Ray*, dealing with the life and films of the Indian film director. Veteran Hollywood director Frank Capra spoke on "the filmmaker as social critic," focusing particularly on his Academy-Award winning film, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.* Finally, students were given a series of selected background readings for each Latin American film in order to provide them with perspectives on the filmmaker, the area, and the themes or subjects of the film.[14]

In addition to our decision to utilize feature films as a basic source, we also sought to select films which, among other things, portrayed the common people of Latin America. Because much of Latin American history has been written and presented with an emphasis on colorful heroes and outstanding political leaders, we decided instead to provide a perspective on the diverse social groups which comprise the Latin American masses. Although this approach did not avoid the treatment of certain elite groups and important institutions, it did remove the study of Latin American history from the presidential balconies, where it has been placed by most textbooks, and instead illustrated life in the *barrios*, or urban slums, rural villages, and other areas not covered extensively in traditional survey courses.

The films were all selected to focus on particular themes, which then formed the basis for a subsequent symposium. *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968), an Argentine documentary, was chosen as the initial film because it was overtly political and thus served to test some of the ideas we had been discussing about media in general and the ways in which filmmakers re-create history. Secondly, it introduced the theme of dependency, which we chose to employ as a model for examining Latin America's industrial and commercial development during much of the twentieth century. Finally, the film was organized into a series of thirteen filmic "chapters" which depicted chronological periods in Argentine history from colonial to modern times. This made it easier for students to initiate their analysis of film.

Next we screened Luis Buñuel's *Los Olvidados (The Young and the Damned)*

(1951), since it was purportedly based on fact and would allow a further consideration of the use of films as historical evidence. Buñuel's depiction of life in a *barrio* (urban slum) of Mexico City served as a springboard for a discussion of the phenomenon of urbanization and urban poverty which persists in Latin America. Nelson Pereira Dos Santos' *Vidas Secas (Barren Lives)* (1963) continued the theme of poverty by illustrating rural poverty, leading to a discussion of how geographic factors—in this case drought—and large landholding patterns help to produce economic dislocation among the poor and to institutionalize social and economic inequities.

Jorges Sanjines' *Blood of the Condor* (1969) presented a view of the Bolivian Indian and gave students some idea of how Indian communities are forced to deal with the broad and alien world of whites and mixed-bloods in the cities. Also, the intrusion of members of The Progress (read "Peace") Corps brought up the issue of United States influence in Latin America. Because Sanjines asserted that the story of involuntary sterilization of Indian women by Progress Corps people in Bolivia was based on fact, the film also brought up the issue of historical veracity. The Peruvian film, *The Green Wall* (1970), expanded the theme of the common people and their world to include a middle-class couple who chose to settle in the Upper Amazon basin and their problems in dealing with the environment and the Peruvian government. The Brazilian film, *The Given Word (O Pagador de Promesas)* (1962), dealt beautifully with the problems encountered by a rural peasant who attempted to fulfill a religious vow in the modern city of Salvador da Bahia. This lead to a discussion of the role played by the Catholic Church in the lives of most Latin Americans.

Salt of the Earth (1951), a U.S. film dealing with Chicano zinc miners in New Mexico during the late 1940's , gave us the opportunity to investigate the relationship of the experiences of persons of Latin American ancestry in the United States with Latin American history per se. Again, since the film was based on an actual historical event and used many participants in the original miners' strike as actors, we had the opportunity of analyzing the film as an artist's presentation of history. Finally, two documentary films—*Tupamaros* (1972), an insider's view of the urban guerrilla movement in Uruguay, and *End of the Revolution?* (1967), which dealt with the capture and execution of Ernesto "Che" Guevara—led to a closing discussion of the prospects of revolution in Latin America, the forms which this struggle might take, and how these filmmakers attempted to "sell" their views of revolution.

Students viewed the above films on Tuesday afternoons and were asked to interpret these documents by writing an extensive (six-page) analysis of the film, in addition to completing a variety of outside readings. These analyses were handed in prior to the Thursday symposium, which featured an area or topical expert who joined us in leading the discussion. The symposium offered students an opportunity to discuss the film after a period of reflection and writing on the subject. We found that the films provoked considerable excitement and debate and that students vigorously responded to the opportunity to discuss them. Moreover, student skills in film analysis developed considerably throughout the course, as can be seen in the exemplary student analyses in this book.

While we did not attempt to provide a complete survey introduction to Latin America, the course format enabled students to explore several important themes which are crucial to an historical understanding of the region and its people. They learned much about the people of Latin America and their life-styles. They also learned something about films and their own responses to them.

We have concluded that the education of students is enhanced when it is based upon their own discovery and inquiry. This is clearly reflected in the quality of written work received from students in the course. Their uniformly enthusiastic responses in the course evaluation forms, which every student in the course was required to complete, indicate that the innovative aspects of the course directly contributed to the students' learning process by stimulating their interest in history, developing in them a fuller understanding of the potential and limitations of films as historical sources, and increasing their "film literacy," a skill which should serve them well throughout their professional and personal lives.

FOOTNOTES

1. Among others, see Elizabeth York Enstam, "The Case for Electronic Media in College History Courses," *The History Teacher*, VI: 2 (February, 1973), 191-200; Arthur Peterson, "History at the Cinema: A Guide for the Movie-Going History Student," *The History Teacher*, VII: 1 (November, 1973), 79-88; William H. McNeill, "The Historian and Historical Films: The Present State of Things and a Look to the Future," *Journal of Higher Education*, (October, 1968), 388-394; John B. Kuiper, "The Historical Value of Motion Pictures," *American Archivist*, 31:4 (October, 1968), 385-390; William Hughes, "Proposal for a Course on Films and History," *University Vision*, 8 (January, 1972), 9-18; Jane M. Loy, "Latin America Through Film: Problems and Possibilities," *Proceedings of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies*, 2 (1973), 39-52; Eugene M. McCreary, "Film and History: Some Thoughts on their Interrelationship," in E. Bradford Burns, editor, *Latin American Cinema: Film and History*, (Los Angeles, 1975), 47-66; John E. O'Connor, "Historians and Film: Some Problems and Prospects," *The History Teacher*, VI: 4 (August, 1973), 543-552; Michael T. Isenberg, "A Relationship of Constrained Anxiety: Historians and Film," *Ibid.*, 553-568; and John E. O'Connor and Martin A. Jackson, *Teaching History with Film* (Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1974).
2. According to Paul J. Vanderwood, "Hollywood and History: Does Film Make the Connection?" *Proceedings of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies*, 2 (1973), 53-60.
3. For example, see Eugene C. McCreary, in Burns, *Latin American Cinema*, 47-66.
4. Christopher Roads, "Films as Historical Evidence," *Society of Archivists Journal*, 3 (October, 1966), 187.
5. O'Connor and Jackson, *Teaching History with Film*, 5-16.
6. O'Connor and Jackson, *Teaching History with Film*, 12-13, 15. According to one author, an average student has watched 15,000 hours of television by the time he/she has graduated from high school. McCreary, "Film and History," p. 48, n. 1.

7. Vanderwood, "Hollywood and History," p. 55, sets out four ways in which historians can use film in teaching history. Roads, "Film as Historical Evidence," notes at least seven ways in which film can be used as historical evidence.

8. See the negative findings concerning classroom documentaries of Loy, "Latin America Through Film," and of O'Connor and Jackson, "Teaching History with Film," 29-35.

9. Two interesting articles on Latin America filmmakers are E. Bradford Burns, "The Latin American Film, Realism, and the Historian," *The History Teacher*, VI: 4 (August, 1973), 569-574, and David Wilson, "Aspects of Latin American Political Cinema," *Sight and Sound*, 41: 3 (Summer, 1972), 127-131. It is also the subject of Burns' essay, "A Filmic Approach to Latin America's Past," in *Latin American Cinema*, 1-46. An excellent discussion of political cinema is David Wilson, "Aspects of Latin American Political Cinema," *Sight and Sound*, 41: 3 (Summer, 1972), 127-131.

10. A list of available Latin American feature-length films, slightly outdated but valuable nonetheless, is Jane Loy's *Latin America: Sights and Sounds. A Guide to Motion Pictures and Music for College Courses*, (Gainesville, 1973), available from the Latin American Studies Association, Box 13362, University Station, Gainesville, Fla. 32601.

11. Hughes, "Proposal for a Course on Film and History," p. 11.

12. This is the argument of William Hughes, "Proposal for a Course on Films and History," *University Vision*, 8 (January, 1972), 9-18. This article deals at length with "film" literacy.

13. R.C. Raack, et. al. The Documentary Film in History Teaching: An Experimental Course," *The History Teacher*, VI:2 (February, 1973), 281-294.

14. Course syllabi and film analysis guidelines are available from the authors upon request, c/o Latin American Studies Program, University of California, Riverside, Ca. 92502. The texts used in the course were: V.F. Perkins, *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies*, (Penguin, 1972); E. Bradford Burns, *Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History*, (Prentice-Hall, 1972); Frank Tannenbaum, *Ten Keys to Latin America*, (Vintage, 1966); and Sven Lindqvist, *The Shadow: Latin America Faces the Seventies*, (Penguin, 1972).

STUDENT FILM ANALYSES

by Robert Pinger

In our approach, the "ideal" critique would analyze a film's cinematic techniques, evaluate the filmmaker's point of view, and compare the images of the film to other sources of information on Latin America. In brief, we tried to promote the idea that any film presents one view of historical "reality," and we urged the students to explore that view and then compare it to the "realities" found in traditional sources, or even their own experiences. We did not argue that one medium is more authoritative than another, but merely that all deserve our analytical consideration.

The initial papers of most students fell far short of this ideal. The relative novelty of the approach confused some students. Others misinterpreted our written guidelines. As a result, the majority of the early papers failed to deal with films on anything more than a simplistic level. Most students showed a marked improvement in their second and third efforts, but some never advanced beyond a straightforward synopsis of a film's plot.

The "synopsis syndrome" was by far the most common fault in the critiques. We expected to find some degree of detachment because viewing habits generally involve an intellectual passivity. Yet it surprised us to find that many students ignored even the emotional aspects of the films in favor of a "this happened, then that happened" approach. Our comments to these papers included specific questions for the student to consider, e.g. What opinion was the filmmaker presenting in this scene? How did he convey this? What response did you have to the scene? We first needed to combat the students' inclination to equate synopsis with analysis.

The second most common error was the "advocate approach." Because a filmmaker took a stand against racism, for instance, students often gave in to the temptation of lavishing the film with praise and stating (usually at great length) that racism is a terrible thing and should not be allowed to exist. We urged these students to think analytically about the means used in presenting the theme. This included encouraging the students to question the validity of "causes" or "solutions" suggested in the film.

A third error, although far less common, was the "nihilistic analysis." Like the advocate approach, a paper of this kind dealt with only one aspect of the film—the thesis. In its usual form, a student would dismiss as "propaganda" any film that supported violent revolution. Here we suggested that propaganda is not necessarily synonymous with "lies" and encouraged these students to investigate the specific statements or images which they considered as misrepresentations of Latin American realities.

The suggested readings helped most students overcome these analytical deficiencies. V.F. Perkins' *Film as Film* gave them a guide to judging the movies per se, and the selected reading on Latin America supplied comparative political and economic information. The readings were not, of course, a panacea. Students could

avoid the mistakes mentioned above and still not take full advantage of the films. Some papers (invariably written by film buffs) gave quite sophisticated critiques of the director's art, discussing editing, lighting, sound, camera work, etc. As often as not, these critiques ignored the "real world" from which the film sprang and paid mere lip service to the historical considerations. Other students did just the opposite—writing an intelligent historical analysis of the themes, without addressing the cinematic presentation. While we allowed the students enough latitude to emphasize their personal interests and opinions, we also provided editorial suggestions to direct them toward the aforementioned "ideal" critique.

From the outset we assumed that few of the students had experience in relating film to traditional sources. Therefore we commented on their papers far more extensively than we would have for a normal class. For the most part, students responded favorably to this attention, and over half the class took advantage of office hours to discuss their work.

Two improvements might be made in future courses using our approach:

1) The students could view a film which has been professionally reviewed (presuming the reviews have an eye toward historical analysis). After seeing the film and reading the reviews, the class might gain a clearer idea of critical possibilities.

2) The students could view a film and have a subsequent session in which the film is repeated. During the second screening the instructor (or visiting lecturers) could point out specific manipulations employed by the filmmaker. The film could be examined scene by scene, or even frame by frame, in an effort to acquaint students with the many nuances of the medium.

COURSE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Student response was overwhelmingly favorable to the class. Of the forty or so questionnaires returned, only six or seven were the least bit critical. All of the criticism came from students with extensive background in both Latin American history and film—they simply stated that nothing covered in the class was new to them although appreciative of our efforts to combine the two areas of study. The more typical opinion is characterized by the following responses to our eight questions:

1) In what respects did the course help to develop your analytical and critical thinking?

Some of the questions raised in the films compelled me to search for additional information; thus I was able to extend my analysis where it appeared that the film "left off." The "lectures" of the instructors reminded me to look critically at the message of the filmmakers and this unwritten "law" remained in my brain during the film and in the process of writing. It was necessary for me to look in depth at the film when I wished to make a particular point and examine how my thesis was actually demonstrated. In addition, because of many years living as a Hollywood popcorn freak, I became as critical to the screen as I am to the text or the personna.

2) In what respects did the course help increase your understanding of film as a medium of communication?

I have never been exposed to the type of film used in this class and at first I was apprehensive that I could use it to any satisfaction without constant explanation along the way. I knew nothing about deriving the "message" from a film, but I was curious . . . I was not severely penalized for making mistakes—but rather encouraged and explicitly instructed by comments on my papers and conferences (without the class listening). We were not dictated to but (with the enthusiasm of the teachers) guided into understanding.

3) In what respects did the course help increase your knowledge and understanding of Latin America and its people?

Latin Americans became real people instead of statistics or names. They suddenly had faces which made them easier (or often more disturbing) to relate to.

4) Discuss analytically the value of the visiting discussants to the course.

The visitors were of benefit in most cases since they were a new critic that could add further insight to the films' historical importance and contemporary relevance. They were useful as a guide and catalyst to student interpretations, while not confining the audience response.

5) Discuss the value of the discussion sessions.

We received vastly differing opinions on this. About half the students thought the sessions were fine. The other half wanted the visitor to do more talking and hear less discussion from the class.

6) Rate the films shown in the course (see chart following page).

7) Through a critical analysis of selected feature films, we have attempted to offer a non-traditional approach to developing an understanding of Latin American history, one not ordinarily provided by written texts and lectures. Keeping in mind that the course was not intended to be a survey, please evaluate this teaching approach.

I feel this approach provides a fuller understanding of the common man in Latin America. I realize this was not a survey course, but I feel that a survey in Latin America should be taken first. This would allow the student to concentrate more on analyzing the medium as to what and why the director is communicating.

8) How would you change the course, if at all, to:

A) Help develop critical and analytical thinking?
Give a fuller introduction of film techniques through readings, lectures, or demonstrations.

B) Help increase an understanding of film as a means of communication?
Give more pertinent information prior to viewing the films; esp. profile of current political situation in the country of the film's origin.

C) Help increase knowledge and understanding of Latin America?
Give more time in which to research and write the papers.

	Very Helpful	Useful	Marginal	Useless	No Opinion
Hour of the Furnaces	32%	36%	24%	0%	8%
Los Olvidados (The Young & the Damned)	47%	35%	13%	0%	5%
Vidas Secas (Barren Live..)	32%	54%	7%	0%	7%
Blood of the Condor	64%	27%	.5%	0%	8.5%
The Green Wall	42%	34%	17%	0%	7%
The Given Word	51%	31%	15%	0%	3%
Salt of the Earth	64%	11%	21%	2%	2%
Tupamaros	51%	29%	9%	0%	11%
End of the Revolution?	39%	29%	13%	5%	14%

Hour of the Furnaces

by Alan Curl

Reading Fernando Solanas' and Octavio Getino's "Hour of the Furnaces" as an historical document appears, at the outset, to be tricky because it purports to actually be a straightforward historical truth, rather than an allegorical tale. As such, it is more difficult to rationally sift fact from distortion than it would be to plot where a fictionalized story does or does not apply to historical reality.

"Hour of the Furnaces" presents its historical interpretation in one of the most dogmatic of forms—the textbook approach. Divided into thirteen chapters, the film is composed of a narrative that reels off facts and statistics relevant for each chapter heading while the images on the screen illustrate the spoken word. As with any propaganda piece, it's hard to discern how facts are manipulated, twisted, or omitted but being recorded in the unique medium of film, one can easily see how the combination of recorded image and sound operate to present the directors' thesis.

By V.F. Perkins' criteria, "Hour of the Furnaces" does not present its points in a necessarily filmic manner—in which all spoken words and music are handled naturally within the drama or *cinema verité*. A much more primitive (by Hollywood standards) technique is used, however, in an Eisenstein-like dialectic between narrative and visual. The directors prove that this method surely drives home any propagandized messages and the simple direct style is in accord with the simplicity with which Argentina's problems and suggested solutions are presented.

Many of the film's images are no more than illustrations of the spoken word. The real power of propaganda, however, lies in the more clever juxtaposition of a narrative description and a visual one that shows something other than what is being talked about—the resultant interpretations being a dialectic of the two. The juxtapositions are suitably unsubtle so that interpretations are somewhat controlled to perceive the film's point.

For example in Chapter 1, History, the accounts of Argentina's historical elite accompany shots of today's bourgeoisie playing golf. While discussing the historical roots of André Gunder Frank's neo-colonialism, we see LBJ. In this manner, the film describes as historical heritage while showing its equally distasteful modern counterpart. Likewise, in Chapter 2, The Land, the narrative concerning untapped resources and the nation's energy forces runs parallel to shots of Argentine men and women—a clear indication that they are the resources to be expended in modernizing the country.

The price that the people pay for this modernization is their humanity. The sign indicating the beginning of Chapter 3, The People, is followed by shots of cramped high-rise windows and of disembodied hands punching factory time cards. Full human forms are only seen again when juxtaposed with the spoken words, "economic resources." Throughout the rest of the film, the elite is similarly equated with over-fed show cows and the draining of Argentine culture in exchange for foreign plastic culture is depicted in the slaughter of cows for outside markets.

Within Chapter 3, The People, is a prolonged sequence inside a family hut that will be repeated in style in Chapter 10, Cultural Violence. The camera moves around the interior of a peasant hut, which, even with only three people in it seems claustrophobically small. As the camera moves around the stark hut, it is thwarted in its movement—always constricted by close walls. The same situation is re-enacted at the Pepsi Cola book-signing party, but here the camera can move around the large airy room freely. In fact, the constriction of the poor is usually visually depicted by static, tight camera angles and stark backgrounds. Only in its treatment of the rich is the camera given complete license.

In the peasant hut sequence, the narration is complemented by an ironic opera piece. The use of opera at all is significant. The music at the film's opening had been a tribal folk chant. With the playing of the opera, we remember the folk music as a part of the cultural identity lost to neo-colonialism. The opera tells of sky blue birds and golden eagles, but in the peasant hut we see only an Argentine bird in a cramped cage.

This sort of musical imagery is continued in the elite ragtime sequence. To the background of 1920's American popular music we see members of the upper class

in Great Gatsby clothes loitering around vintage cars. The rich are, in their own words, "reliving their golden days." The irony, of course, is that these were not their golden days, but those of an imported culture.

The film's catch-all excuse for Argentina's social, political, and economic plight is neo-colonialism. Native intelligence, culture, and creativity are held down by foreign imperialism. Big block letters accuse the CIA of running the country and announce that truth, reality, and reason are, like the people, on the edge of the law. Taken rationally, these proclamations are just so much paranoid rambling, but coming on the heels of a speeding montage of the corruption of Argentine culture by Coca-Cola, foreign cars, bleached blondes, Batman, and Mandrake the Magician, on the heels of lingering shots of starving babies and of the incurably diseased, the block-letter accusations strike an emotional chord in the irate and frustrated viewer.

The film's dizzying montages are designed to show that mass communication is replacing conventional warfare as imperialist nations force their own plastic exportable cultures upon Argentina—making its own culture appear worthless. Again the film makes a blatant emotional play by comparing the ideological warfare in Latin America to the bloodshed in Viet Nam—a subject which in 1968 was emotionally charged for everyone.

In Viet Nam, the narrative tells us, the people had only to look above to see the enemy (anthropomorphized into fighter jets). The neo-colonial take-over, however, is more subtle. Again the idea of the enemy is connected with airplanes, but now we see Jackie Kennedy, army officials, and world figures stepping down the gangplank. The Peace Corps infiltrate urban areas and scholarships train an intelligentsia in imperialist world thought, separating the educated sector from the people.

"Hour of the Furnaces" sets forth the thesis that this ideological penetration is essential to neo-colonialism to destroy any concept of "the nation." During one of the montage invasions of foreign culture, we hear the beginning of the alphabet in English and the ending in French—a threat that exported culture is about to become the alpha and the omega of Argentine experience.

Such a ruthlessly simplified analysis of the problem deserves a similar solution, as seen in Chapter 13, The Choice. In effect, the film presents no choice—from the directors' point of view, to accept the life being forced on them is no alternative. The only solution is revolution. As early as Chapter 3, The People, we have been told that potential violence does exist—those spots of light in darkness which as the camera moves closer turn out to be miners' helmets.

The funeral in the last chapter of the film indicates the mortality of an entire culture unless those sparks from the miners' helmets can cut through the darkness of neo-colonialism. Rebellion, we are told, is the only way to choose one's destiny—this final bit of narrative told over the body of "Che" Guevara, to whom the film was dedicated.

Until the very end, "Hour of the Furnaces" remains strangely devoid of any real facial close-ups. Most shots are either medium or medium-close. With the long final image of Che, however, we are confronted with a close-up that fills every inch of the screen. Che, as the bearer of revolution, the saviour from neo-colonialism, in this massive shot becomes a new deity—supplanting an identical compositional de-

piction of a plaster Virgin Mary with her finger to her lips.

As an historian, my basic reaction is that history, like journalism, should be presented in a detached, dispassionate manner. However, to understand the facts and dates, one must be cognizant of emotional issues. If we view "Hour of the Furnaces" as an emotional plea, recognizing the fact that some points are overdrawn to the exclusion of others, that while the basic message may be true, it is incredibly oversimplified, we have a document of at least one part of an historical truth.

Hour of the Furnaces

by Mark Tourtellotte

After 1945 the capitalist powers had every intention of reestablishing the pattern of colonial rule which had existed prior to the war. However, the changed world situation and the strength of the national liberation movements compelled colonialism to retreat.* In the new situation of dying colonialism, neo-colonialism appears as an expectoration of the weakened imperialists. Hence the necessity

> "to explain and expose among the broadest masses and toilers of all countries, and particularly of backward countries, the deception systematically practiced by the imperialists in creating, under the guise of politically independent states, states which are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily."**

This was the primary goal of "La Hora de los Hornos."

Elaborating further on the latest strategy of imperialism, "Hour of the Furnaces" conveyed the low profile techniques of neo-colonialism; or as it is tastefully designated, "Coca-Colonization." In order to maintain political and economic control and domination the imperialists must in their new disguise create and perpetuate institutions and ideas symbiotically compatable with their capitalist mode of production. Thus arise the ideological tools such as the Peace Corps, Protestant and Catholic Missionaries, and the reactionary media.

Economic tools such as the A.I.D., Eximbank, World Bank, American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) tighten their grips on the economy more each year. All of these means and hundreds of others facilitate the conversion of the masses to think and act as North Americans, to support the economic structure of their society which is thoroughly penetrated by foreign capital. This history of the dependent relationship created through neo-colonialism was a secondary goal of the film.

Another significant goal was the portrayal of the necessity of counter-revolution in the schema of neo-colonialism. Since the entire system of international exploitation depends upon keeping the workers and peasants from power, methods

*(direct colonial rule has ended in some 60 countries since 1945)

**(Lenin, V.I.; Draft Thesis on the National and Colonial Question, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 144-151)

of violent suppression of the Left are essential for the maintenance of this paradise for multi-national corporations. "Hour of the Furnaces" displayed this quite well both implicitly and explicitly.

Although the film accurately depicted neo-colonialism as a stage in the history of imperialism, it stopped short analytically. After showing the tragic urgency of a situation demanding resolution, the only option offered was ultraleft violence or liberation through death. The audience was given a gun, told whom to aim it at, but not how to pull the trigger. In other words, the problem was escapable through death but otherwise unsolvable.

Furthermore, as so many other national liberation groups forget to mention, imperialism is merely a symptom of the human-devouring cancer of capitalism. Capitalism is the original cause of imperialism. Imperialism is the so-called "highest stage of capitalism," whence capital bursts forth from the chains of national market boundaries to hungrily invade the "free world." Such shallow analysis by national liberators betrays the masses into opposing the foreign capitalists, only to find themselves controlled even more by the national bourgeoisie. Only the total destruction of the capitalist system of production can produce a society whose sole purpose is the advancement of the majority of the population rather than an elite group of foreign capitalists. The multinational corporations have supplied the means to satisfy human needs through technology. What remains to be done is the direction of production to fulfill those needs rather than an American profit structure (i.e. in the film the skulls of the cattle were literally crushed while those of the people were figuratively crushed; the symptom is imperialism, the cause is capitalism).

Summarily, "Hour of the Furnaces" did present an accurate "perspectivo" concerning neo-colonialism and most of the ramifications arising therefrom. The documentary fashion of presentation allowed striking vivification of the contradiction and violence existing in Argentina and the Third World as a whole. The chaotic movement, revolutionary fervor and desperation all come across astonishingly. As far as an understanding of Latin America is concerned nothing could have better depicted the future of the empire built through U.S. imperialism. What the imperialists are finding out is that the people of Latin America are on to their game and are no longer laying down before Uncle Sam to be stepped on as a pathway to profits. Organizations, political parties, and spontaneous uprisings are the result of the conditions presented in "Hour of the Furnaces."

"Hour of the Furnaces" also showed the reaction of the imperialists to any attempts at social change which the recent events in Chile make even clearer. This too is what the future holds for many of the countries of Latin America, because when the bourgeoisie anywhere (national or foreign) are compelled to give up their rights and privileges in the name of the people, they try to stifle the cries for justice. But the people are more, many more than the bourgeoisie, and we will win.

Los Olvidados

by Larry La Pica

The most dramatic aspect of Luis Buñuel's film *Los Olvidados* may be the anglicized title, *The Young and the Damned*. Although the film won awards for best picture and best director in the Cannes Film Festival of 1951, *Los Olvidados* is unlikely to have much impact on the grief-violence saturated audiences of 1975. The plot of a young boy fighting against insurmountable odds to better his condition has become trite.

Los Olvidados does have appeal for a selected audience, however. Historians and social scientists may find interest in the subtleties of the film. *Los Olvidados* is analogous to a documentary. Captions tell us that the film is based upon authentic incidents and characters. Presumably names have been changed to protect the guilty. We are also told that because the film is based on fact, no solutions will be offered. However, Buñuel is depicting life in a *barrio*, or slum. He cannot escape relaying what he believes to be the causes of juvenile delinquency. Indeed, the purpose of the film is didactic. Does not Buñuel in recognizing particular causes of problems imply solutions? What contributes to the delinquency of a juvenile in a barrio, according to Buñuel?

The primary theme of *Los Olvidados* is environmental determinism. Buñuel effectively uses his characters to depict incidents and voice archaic social theories that contribute to the plight of the poor. Pedro, the protagonist, cannot escape his environment no matter how noble his intentions. His one chance lies with the state farm. There he finds the trust, understanding and education that his home life failed to provide. It is likely that Buñuel is using the state farm "warden" to voice his own opinions. Unfortunately, the moment Pedro steps back into the street he is vulnerable to the evils he temporarily escaped. Pedro's temporary job as a caretaker for a merry-go-round strongly symbolizes the futility of his life. At the climax of *Los Olvidados* Pedro is slain by Jaíbo and is left to die among the animals. Ironically, the animals were the only source of peace for Pedro during his life.

Buñuel uses the character of the blind musician as a foil for common social theories. The blind man believes youths are delinquents because they are lazy. His ultimate solution is that "they should be killed before they're born." It is unlikely that Buñuel is trying to present a strong argument for contraception. It may be more accurate to claim that he is attempting to discredit the "lazy delinquent" theory still prevalent today. Buñuel does this with the ease of a song. The blind man gathers the street crowd together to hear a song about his beloved General Díaz . According to E. Bradford Burns in *Latin America, A Concise Interpretive History*, "Porfirio Díaz and the 'new Creoles' had ruled for 34 years without popular mandate for the benefit of a privileged native elite and foreign investors."[1] It took the force of a revolution spearheaded by Francisco I. Madero to cause the Mexican dictator to flee into European exile in 1911.

The other characters, "Little Eyes" and Jaíbo, symbolize the two extremes of Pedro's character. "Little Eyes" has been abandoned by his father in the market-

place. He knows of luxuries such as milk baths but little about life in the streets. He is without sin. "Little Eyes" could symbolize Pedro before the corrupting influences of the barrio. The antithesis of "Little Eyes" is Jaíbo. He is portrayed as a hardened criminal who will resort to murder if it meets his needs. It is against all that Jaíbo symbolizes that Pedro tries to fight. It is interesting that the effects of the barrio immediately begin to affect the innocence of "Little Eyes". In a moment of rage he picks up a rock and threateningly holds it above the blind man's head. It is unlikely that "Little Eyes" could commit an act of violence at that moment. However, his nature in the future is less predictable.

Buñuel also highlights problems within Pedro's home. Pedro's mother abuses her son because of his father's desertion. In a surrealistic dream sequence, Pedro receives the long-denied love of his mother. He also gets to eat the meat that was saved for his three younger brothers and sisters. The large number of children we see throughout the film does not betray historical accuracy. "Between 1920 and 1960, Latin America witnessed a phenomenal demographic rise, an average of 2.9 percent per year, which amounted to a 126 percent increase."[2] Improved health care and medical facilities in the city increased the life expectancy of infants as compared with those in the rural areas. Because of better health and the influx of people lured away from rural areas by the promise of the city, "between 1930 and 1968, the urban population (of Mexico) grew at the rate of 4.5 to 5 percent per year, while the rural population increased by only 1.5 percent per year."[3]

The last character of interest is Meche. She is young, pretty and vulnerable, and her fate is predictable. Like Pedro's mother, Meche may bear her first child at the tender age of fourteen. Already she performs tasks that would tire a mature woman. Like others in the film, she is intrigued by superstition. One wonders about the increased medical benefits of the city as the sick in the barrios are treated with dead men's teeth and white doves.

In conclusion, Buñuel has presented us with a microcosm of all the urban slums throughout the world. He has not glossed over reality to produce a slick celluloid epic on tragedy. There are times when violins and thunderstorms conveniently appear, but these are exceptions. Much of the film is underplayed. The setting, a barrio in Mexico, could be any ghetto in any city. The importance of *Los Olvidados* is that we are taken there. We walk through the dusty streets amid the multitudinous candlemakers, merchants, beggars and Coca Cola signs. We catch glimpses of other worlds as wealthy people traverse our paths in their richly upholstered automobiles. We discover the importance of animals in the existence of a modern twentieth century people. The cacophony is only momentarily interrupted by the distant bells of the Catholic church.

As we sit back observing this strange new world, we learn of things history books never tell us. We know the facts and statistics. We know that, "In 1970, more than one-third of Latin America's urban population lived in submarginal housing"

[1] Burns, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 160.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

[3] *Ibid.*

and that, "on the average, 40 percent of the inhabitants of capital cities lived in 'spontaneous settlements,' a euphemism for squatters' shacks."[4] We have even read about slum life through such authors as Oscar Lewis and Frank Norris. However, Buñuel makes us experience what we have read and studied. He has brought us face to face with many of the symptoms of the plight of the urban poor. For a brief moment we are the world's forgotten and oppressed. This is a salutory experience. A strong symbol in *Los Olvidados* is the new buildings that are being erected near the barrio. It is in the shadow of such a building that Jaíbo murders Julián. The symbol is clear. Wealth and industry progress at the expense and neglect of the poor. Inequality of wealth, education, opportunity and love are the causes of juvenile delinquency as portrayed by Buñuel. In this, he has not discovered any new political-socio-economic breakthroughs. However, he has achieved something important. He has made a historical record of life in a barrio. As long as there are writers, painters, sculptors and filmmakers reminding us of the problems within our society, there is a chance that those problems may be corrected.

Barren Lives

By Kris White

Frank Tannenbaum describes the hacienda as "an entire social system [that] governs the lives of those attached to it from the cradle to the grave. It encompasses economics, politics, education, social activities, and industrial development."[1] Tannenbaum speaks of the hacienda as it was in the past. Nelson Pereira Dos Santos, in his film "Barren Lives," treats hacienda life as it still exists today. His portrayal of the lives of one family is as accurate as Tannenbaum's description.

In the opening scenes of the film we are shown the vast barren waste lands of Northeastern Brazil. Throughout the film we see dry riverbeds and dusty brush land. The eerie background music reminds us of a nagging fly buzzing around our heads in the choking heat. We begin to feel that the land's hostility to human inhabitants is responsible for much of the misery of the Brazilians. In the distance four figures emerge, carrying with them all their possessions. It is an impoverished peasant family who rejoices everytime they capture a dinner of parrot, guinea pigs, and mice. They are among twenty-seven million poor Brazilians. They have no jobs, no home, no land. They are the victims of former employees of a hacienda that fell prey to a draught. They become the victims and employees of yet another hacienda.

The hacienda is a hold-over from a feudal age. The landlord extracts labor from his subjects, and in return allows them to live on his land. The tenant is allowed to keep part of what he raises, in this case, one out of four calves. It is not a system in which the peasant stands to gain. Fabiano is without land, food, and shelter. He is desperate for a job and he humbly begs the hacendado to hire him. He becomes

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

1) Frank Tannenbaum, *Ten Keys to Latin America* (Vintage Books, New York: 1962), p. 80.

completely dependent on the hacendado. He has no bargaining power for he knows that he can be easily replaced. He is therefore subject to unjust treatment. He goes to "the big house" to receive his wages. When he discovers that he has not been paid in full he tells the hacendado that he is no slave. And yet, he is a slave. He is tied to the hacienda out of desperation, and the nature of the system is such that, in Tannenbaum's words, "it established and maintained a system of dependence between the hacendado and his peons which perpetuated an authoritarian tradition of a master and very humble servant."[2] Fabiano can be treated as a slave for there is no reason to treat him differently. The hacendado, angered by the peon's charges, tells him to accept what he has offered or leave with nothing. Fabiano recognizes his take-it-or-leave-it predicament, and in one of the most degrading and humiliating sequences of the film, he apologizes for his accusations, claiming that his wife has erred. He cannot afford to antagonize the source of his next meal.

Power, wealth, and prestige are embodied in the hacendado. He is "a social ideal - a superior being possessed of broad acres and numerous servants, dominant, domineering, patronizing, and paternal, with no restrictions between himself and the peon on the plantation."[3] He is well aware of his advantages over the laborer. He sits in his comfortable home while a black violinist entertains his daughter. The villagers, eager to please him, dance for him and ceremoniously distribute portions of a cow. He sits with his entourage, honored by their dedication, though obviously bored. He is "the master of all he survey[s] and the world look[s] good to him."[4]

The film examines another aspect of hacienda life. The peon has no legal recourse. Fabiano tries to sell a pig only to find that he must pay a tax. In protest he cries "you have no right to tax me." He tells a local police official that he has no right to harass him. But it soon becomes apparent that it is the peon who has no rights. The hacienda provides its own system of arbitrary justice. Fabiano is punished for showing "disregard and disrespect" for the uniform of the policeman. He is thrown into jail without a trial and without a cause. Such a total absence of justice has traditionally been found only in the most tyrannical societies. This is the society of the hacienda.

Without justice and bargaining power the hacienda can preserve the status quo. It can also perpetuate itself by hampering social mobility and education, two key ingredients that would enable the growth of a political power that could effectively challenge the feudal hacienda system. The peon is totally indebted to the hacendado. The hacendado pays him only a subsistance wage (in Fabiano's case it is below the subsistance level, forcing him to leave). The peon is locked into the financial status of a peasant. A vicious circle begins to emerge between education and social mobility; without money he cannot afford an education that might provide him with skill that could command a higher income. Without ample resources and education he has no political power to change the culture of poverty in which he was born.

2) *Ibid.*, p. 90.

3) *Ibid.*

4) *Ibid.*

5) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Without political, economic, social, or cultural change a society does not progress. The book *Barren Lives* was written in the thirties. Dos Santos' film was made in 1962. Time on the hacienda is obscured. The events that take place in the film could have happened one hundred years ago, or in the 1930's, or in the 1960's, or in the 1970's. The hacienda system has continued for years, relatively unchanged. Certainly there is little indication that the life styles of the inhabitants have significantly been altered. The standard of living is low. There are few modern conveniences in the homes of the peons. Travel is by foot, horse, or ox cart. There are no modern ranching techniques, no attempt to improve the land. The lives of the peons today closely resembles Tannenbaum's description of their forefathers.

Besides political power, change may be brought about by contact with other culture and ideas. But the peon is isolated on the hacienda. It is true that Fabiano does not spend his entire life on one plantation as most peons. But each society he encounters is that of a hacienda nature. Like other peons, his only contacts with people take place in the village. The village "tends to serve as a social center for the neighboring haciendas. The people from the *fazendas* (as haciendas are called in Brazil) will attend church in the central community, if it is not too far away. . . . The town will also serve as a marketplace to which the agregados carry—usually on their heads—the few products they have to sell."[5] This is an accurate description of Fabiano's life. His only contacts with people outside of his family are people who share his plight. He works with them, trades with them, socializes with them. He goes to the same town to receive his wages, sell his pig, and participates in the local celebration.

Perhaps the most devastating effect of the hacienda system is discouragement. The hopelessness of the peon's life is exemplified by the expectations of a better life and the brutal realization that it will never be achieved. Fabiano's wife wants a leather bed like the one Mr. Thomas had. The money that is to buy the bed is squandered in a poker game. She also wants to stop moving and live with "decent" people. (Baleia, the dog, only yawns, as if she has heard these same unfulfilled hopes before.) She wants her children to be educated. Yet they will probably be caught in the same vicious circle becoming cowhands like their father. The wife can still hope, but she realizes her family is trapped. She describes Hell as an evil place, with hot sticks, a place for the damned. As she speaks these words to her son, she realizes that she was indeed born in Hell. She wishes that she would "die and end it all." She curses her miserable existence, her "blasted" life. She does get a new dress and shoes however, and she proudly wears them to the celebration. They symbolize a prosperous period in her life. But it is only momentary prosperity. She will soon have no use for the shoes she so desperately wanted, the "swell shoes" that only make her "walk like a parrot." "Swell shoes" do not belong on the feet of a peasant.

Fabiano's wife is discouraged and perplexed. She does not understand why they must always move, why they must work so hard and achieve so little. She does not understand why they will never reach the status and wealth of the hacendado. Families like Fabiano's did not acquire their life styles, but rather were given them at birth, and they cannot peacefully change their inherited position. They are the victims of a well-established, self-perpetuating system characterized by unequal land

distribution, unequal income, unequal power, unequal prestige. They are the victims of the hacienda and the vehicle by which an elitist society maintains itself.

Blood of the Condor

by James R. Chamberlain

Today the search for the role of the Indian in Latin American society has become somewhat paradoxical. During the past half-century, as intellectuals and politicians attempted to find the roots for nationalist movements within their countries, their focus has been turned many times toward the Indians and their pre-Hispanic attainments. This has been particularly true in areas where great Indian civilizations flourished prior to European contact and where now only scattered remnants remind the descendants of these cultures of their past glory. In these regions, the theme of *indigenismo* (or Indianism), has come to predominate a large part of the reformist and revolutionary literature. The ideal expressed in many of these works tends to be one of a return to the grandeur which existed before the Spanish conquest. While writers, such as Mariano Gonzáles Prada and José Carlos Mariátegui have extolled the virtues of the quasi-socialist Incan economic system, politicians, like Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, have built strong national parties upon the role of the Indian in Latin American politics.

Still, the Indian continues to live in his misery. Unable or unwilling to become integrated into the mainstream of Latin American society, he has become the reluctant symbol of a now-defeated people. As Sven Lindquist points out in *The Shadow: Latin America Faces the Seventies:*

> "Plane-loads of American tourists arrive daily in Cuzco—white people coming to admire the ruins of the conquered Indian civilization, to see the genuine descendants of the Incas in their ponchos and embroidered hats. Other white men show them round, and pocket the takings. The Indians, who once built and owned all this, don't make a cent. The home-woven garments of their poverty hang as decorations in the tourist restaurants. But a human being clad in the same garments wouldn't get in. No notice is ever required to forbid this, since it is already financially and socially impossible. They have neither money nor courage. The Indians are only extras, flowing past outside the windows on sore and naked feet, unreachable and incomprehensible in their own picturesque world."[1]

In his film, *Blood of the Condor* Jorge Sanjines attempts to present the Indian as something more than just a visual image, but rather as a person with thoughts and feelings. The film, it would appear from the Quechua dialogue, was made initially for indigenous consumption. Still, one cannot get over the feeling that Sanjines' view of the Indian has been greatly tempered by mestizo and European values to appeal to a far broader audience. This is revealed by the occasional use of English and by the printed prologue discussing the issue of abortion and birth control.

1) Lindquist, Sven, *The Shadow: Latin America Faces the Seventies* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1972), pp. 110-111.

Like other indigenistas before him, Sanjines shows the Indian as being "trapped" by a modernizing society which does not care to understand him. His old ways are being downgraded, ("The city has forgotten our Gods,") and he, himself, is forced to deny his heritage. Sanjines does an excellent job of showing how this socialization is taking place as he compares and contrasts the Indian, Ignacio, with his urbanized brother, Sixto. The journey of the wounded Ignacio, himself, is demonstrative of this. Unable to survive the social injustices of the countryside, he must come to the city to find help. Unlike those with whom he comes, however, Ignacio doesn't have the time to change into city clothes and to attempt to fill the role of the urban worker. He is an intruder and his only hope for survival lies in his brother who has seemingly already made the transition.

Unfortunately, it soon becomes obvious that an Indian can't escape his past by merely changing his clothes and getting a job in the city. As his brother slowly dies, Sixto discovers that his personalistic contacts are of little use when it comes to the need for concrete action, especially where money is concerned. All around him the injustices become more and more obvious until at the end, he is fully confronted by the luxuries of the wealthy and realizes that he must either break into their world or return to the *campo* (or countryside). Failing to do the former, he chooses the latter and once again becomes an Indian, but this time an Indian willing to fight for his own interests. Thus, the conclusion appears to be one of the armed struggle against social injustice from the outside.

It is here that Sanjines' indigenist approach appears to have its greatest weaknesses. Unlike the Europeanized Bolivian leadership which views the Indian as being a problem on the way toward a modern, industrialized society, Sanjines sees the urban sector as constituting a threat to an equally important Indian society. Since the two societies have obviously been unable to live together equitably up until now, Sanjines sees the need for a choice between them, and he chooses the Indian way of life. Throughout the film, Indian customs and superstitions are treated as being superior to the science of the outside world. *Mama Coca* tells the truth while the gringos obviously don't. Sitting in the sun fills one with light and burying clay children will improve a woman's fertility. Although Ignacio does a thorough investigation of the Progress Corps' sterilization activities, the final decision for violence is taken on the advice of the local shaman that "evil came with the foreigners." All of this leads one to feel that Sanjines' solution to the whole problem would either be the destruction of the Europeanized urban sector or, at least, a complete break by the Indian from it. The rifles which are raised at the end are not only against the foreign exploiters, nor only opposed to the wealthy. Rather Sanjines' revolution has as its end the dominance of the Indian culture in the making of the Bolivian national society.

While this concept is not new and harkens back to the Indian rebellions of the late eighteenth century, it is in many ways unrealistic, even in a largely "Indian" country like Bolivia. First, it fails to properly understand Indian society itself. While Sanjines completely debunks the stereotype of the Indian as the stoic sufferer who will quietly accept his fate in life, he at the same time creates another, equally false image. To Sanjines, Ignacio is like the condor, an intellectually soaring non-

conformist who, though uneducated, sees life far clearer than do the hypocritical outsiders. The lack of understanding between the Progress Corps and the Indians of the community comes about because of the gringos' pride and insensitivity, while the locals obviously saw right through their act and, therefore, didn't want to cooperate. Although they were a little bit slow to catch on to what was occurring they were better than the North Americans who never did understand the Indians point of view. To avoid using the word "romantic," Sanjines' portrayal of the Indian and his culture is remarkably superficial as compared to his characterization of the faults of modern society. This leads one to believe that in his own life, the director is closer to the urban society than to the Indian whom he chooses to praise.

Nevertheless, unlike the early indigenistas, Sanjines has had some contact with his protagonists and is able to choose scenes which symbolize the duality of worlds into which the Indian has been cast. Scenes, such as that of Ignacio entering the ultramodern Maternity Center, give the full impact of the two worlds meeting in a violent collision. Still, by having Ignacio reject the Center, Sanjines suggests that progress may not necessarily by the most desirable goal for the Indian to pursue. This conservative attitude, in and of itself, would stifle the creativity of Indian society and lead to a stagnation of Indian culture, making the old ways seem to be the best. This also appears to be unrealistic.

If true liberation is to come to the Indian masses, it must bring with it an awakening of Indian thought, an improvement over that which the outside world has to offer. It cannot be an imitation of modern society, but a genuine, indigenous movement for progress which eventually overcomes the forces which have for so very long held the Indian down. One cannot go backward. The Inca Empire has been dead for 400 years and wishing its return will never bring it back.

In *Blood of the Condor*, Jorge Sanjines does an excellent job of showing the problem as it now exists. Yet his plans for revolution are not revolutionary at all, but reactionary. In this regard, the film is worth viewing mainly to give the outside world a full view of how its actions have harmed the Indian and to warn them as to what the result of further activities might be. Still, as far as being a sure guide for future improvements, it is rather ineffective. The director has, nonetheless, juxtaposed the two worlds in a way which might in the future suggest other, more reasonable, solutions. If this be the case, then the film might very well be considered a success.

The Green Wall

by Mary T. Smith

Several important films viewed in this class have discussed man's continuing struggle for adjustment to or defiance of the cultural landscape. Often the cultural environment has consisted of a stratified, racist social system where western values and products were seemingly the escape from social, economic, and political oppression. Both *The Young and the Damned* and *Blood of the Condor* depict their

characters in terms of trying to fight and exist in a predominantly hostile and foreign social milieu.

In many ways, *The Green Wall* is a sharp contrast. The oppressed masses in the slums give way to one, mestizo middle class family. Both Mario and Delba possess financial security, education, and a western sophistication. They have a modern flat in Lima equipped with a stereo, contemporary music, and probably an automobile. They are the first characters not from the oppressed masses who have not been cast as completely evil and inhuman.

Hundreds of thousands of migrant Indians, mulattoes, and mestizos are striving for a semblance of what Delba and Mario have: economic stability including employment, education, respectability, and acceptance in society. Mario realizes, however, that their Western sophistication has also left a void. There is no harmony in Lima, and no accomplishment that will be carried into the future. As Mario and Delba discuss their future yet another time, blaring sirens fill the apartment. Film cuts of congested roads, milling crowds, and crowded housing are also shown several times to impress one about the quality of life in Lima.

Mario decides to homestead in Northern Peru in the Upper Amazon Basin near Tingo Maria. Exploration of this area began in the early 1500's by both the Spanish and Portuguese. Their expeditions were ones of extraction and exploitation. These men looked for gold, slaves, quinine, rubber, and timber. It was not until after World War II that the government began to encourage permanent settlement in the area. Some land was made available, agricultural experiment stations were set up, and roads were built. Before moving, he spends months trying to obtain papers from the government. Although the policy of the government is to encourage settlement in the jungle, he is discouraged from doing so by the attitudes and actions of the minister, various clerks, secretaries, and loopholes. He is determined, and after five years of fighting and homesteading, he finally receives the title to his land.

In the Amazon jungle, the physical landscape proves to Mario to be as formidable as the cultural landscape at the coast. Tannenbaum described the colonization of this area as very disappointing and is pessimistic about success even though there are improved drugs for tropical diseases, insecticides, and improved communications and transportation systems. Mario soon confirms Tannenbaum's statement that

> to anyone who has traveled in the *montaña* and the upper reaches of the Amazon and has experienced the continuous rains, the floods, the heat and the humidity, and the sheer isolation and distance, the prospect must remain slim, the cost high, and the time distant. In the next few generations, only a miracle could populate the now empty spaces of the eastern Andes and that half of South America that roughly falls within the Amazonian belt, and make them flourish.[1]

From Tannenbaum's analysis, there is little evidence why Mario forged ahead into the dense wilderness. He writes to his wife, while touring the area, of the beauty of

1) Tannenbaum, Frank, *Ten Keys to Latin America* (Vintage Books, 1962), p. 21.

the Amazon jungle, the great walls that rise up on both sides of the river. He has a dream for the future, a future that cannot be for him or his family in Lima with their flat and an "eight-to-five" job.

By the end of the film, Mario has been homesteading for approximately five years. He slashed and burned to prepare the land, planted citrus trees, maize, coffee, and built a small but comfortable home. Homesteading was difficult, back-breaking work with many set-backs, and yet everyone looked toward the future when things would be better and more secure.

This physical environment that has created a future then strikes out and takes away the reason for this laborious investment. A snake bite kills his son Romulo. Mario painfully realizes that even in this remote area the symbolic snake, the government, reaches out and bites, too. Mario leaves the farm the day his son dies because the governmental officers are breaking his plants. He has difficulty in getting to town because there are so many people who are going in to hear the President speak. In order to obtain the serum that will save his son, he must find the director of the Medical Center who is in town with the President. As Delba and Mario bring back the coffin, they are almost run over by the Presidential party speeding past them, probably to inspect oil fields.

When Mario and Delba bury the small white coffin near their farm, we know that they will remain on their land and not try to escape unpleasant memories by returning to the city. Their sorrow is of the deepest type, and yet they must continue fighting and struggling what is now properly identified as both the physical and cultural environment. They are truly part of the land because their son is now in communion with the earth. *The Golden Serpent* brutally, but appropriately, states that, "Nobody can spend his life weeping and praying over the dead. In the struggle with the river and the land, life is danger and we give death the place it deserves."[2]

In *Highways into the Upper Amazon Basin,* Hegen states "Neither statistics nor records, neither books nor policies suggest a solution. Only the people on the land, and the forest around them, and the rains upon them, speak. And this is the challenge: To listen well, to understand, and, most of all, to help. Knowledge entails responsibility."[3] *The Green Wall* is the most effective medium between statistics and records and actually living in the area. Through the use of cinemagraphic techniques such as symbolism and flashbacks, the director has the power to control the type and flow of information that will influence and manipulate this story as an emotional and educational experience. An example of this can be seen with the death of their son. We watch him grow up through the use of flashbacks, observing his lonely playing in the "village," and listen to the plans for him to attend school the following year. This child's struggle with death is an extremely emotional scene which is heightened by the interrupting, superficial cuts of the President's party and his political speech.

2) Alegria, Ciro, *The Golden Serpent* (Signet Classics, 1963), p. 182.

3) Hegen, Edmund Eduard, *Highways into the Upper Amazon Basin–Pioneer Lands in Southern Columbia, Ecuador, and Northern Peru* (Gainesville, 1966), p. 6.

Hegen's case histories, Tannenbaum's realistic appraisal of the area, and the engineer's death after being bitten by a viper in *The Golden Serpent* could never achieve the emotional and intellectual impact of that one scene in *The Green Wall.*

The powerful lesson that Mario and Delba learned while homesteading in the Amazon jungle, and the reason why they will continue their struggle against the physical and cultural environment, is well stated by geographer Hegen:

> After holding the field experience against many a theory and many a system, there evolved inescapably and remains deeply impressed only one concept: the interrelationship between man as a free agent in his environment and in his culture. This concept became very clear, once in the field, because upon the stage of the virgin tropical forest, the vastness of the untouched land, and of countless unbridged rivers, each step, each gesture, and each act of man reveals the profound relationship to his culture, to his social organization, and to his economic system . . . Everything that man is and does in the Oriente is a powerful argument for these relationships.[4]

The Given Word

by Patrick Blake

Anselmo Duarte's "The Given Word" is a modern filmic variation on an old theme–"What would happen if Jesus came back to the world today?" So rich with irony and contradictions is the contrast between the "historical" Jesus and the institutions which survive in his name that the theme has an almost irresistible appeal for social critics. And so well known are the events of Jesus' life (especially his passion and crucifixion) that the possibilities for allegorical moralizing pose equally almost irresistible temptations, especially for the filmmaker who can use his camera to underscore parallels–parallels which threaten to descend always into the banal and obvious. It is to Duarte's credit that his film, by and large, escapes this pitfall and becomes the searing indictment of the Catholic Church in Latin America which it was clearly his intention to produce.

Duarte's central character, Ze, does not believe himself to be the returned Christ, at least not consciously. It is an identity thrust upon him by others; Ze never loses sight of himself as a simple, pious farmer who has made a sacred vow which he is determined to fulfill. Yet the vow in its particulars was a product of Ze's own mind. The ancient custom of a penitential pilgrimage involving the carrying of a heavy cross in imitation of Jesus' walk to Cavary implies some identification of the penitent with Jesus. However, this psychological connection is left unexplored in the film.

A film about the Church in modern society must of necessity deal with a series of tension-laden polarities–good and evil, State and Church, urban (modern) man and rural (traditional) man, the individual and the institution, rich and poor, and so on. Duarte opts to present these as reflected in characters and images that are virtual archetypes. He sees no dialectical process of interpenetration and change;

4) *Ibid.*

the polarities meet and engage in conflict but emerge unaltered. It is a vision of a decadent, stagnant society, more acted upon than acting, irrational at its base and as the commencement of his pilgrimage.

When Ze and his wife arrive at the city church where his vow is to be consummated, we realize that the thirty miles of agony which he has endured may be much less of an obstacle to that consummation than the seemingly impregnable edifice of church and Church. Duarte's camera contrasts the insignificance of Ze and his wife with the imposing architectural bulk of the church, emphasizing the point he wished to make about its nonhuman, indeed dehumanizing, scale.

Duarte makes brilliant use of the monumental stairs leading up to the church. From below they appear as an almost insuperable barrier between the "higher" life of the church and the teeming masses on the city streets below. From above they form the center of the stage for much of the film's action. The director delights in the potential for vertical change in camera position, constantly emphasizing the differing viewpoints from "above" and "below".

The same dichotomy is reflected in the doctrinal or theological issues raised by Ze's synthesis of all of the mystical (or superstitious, if you wish) elements of his consciousness. For the Church the tolerance of the intermixture of "pagan" with Christian elements has a limit which Ze has apparently passed. It never occurs to the representatives of the Church that the problem he poses can be solved simply by allowing him to enter. Questions of public relations–prestige and "image"–are far more vital. "The Church is God's, not yours." "The man is secondary–what matters is the position of the Church." So Ze is excluded as a devil-worshipper, a heretic, and the simple solution becomes unavailable as the sensationalist press incites the incendiary masses to actions which inevitably lead to the intervention of the State and the death of Ze.

It is through Ze's symbolic crucifixion and the final consummation of his vow through the action of the people carrying him on his cross into the church that Duarte completes his allegory. Christ returns to the Church as the result of the actions of those "below," not through the machinations of those "above".

It is obvious that Duarte shares little of the sanguine view of the role of the Church in Latin America as expressed by Tannenbaum in his *Ten Keys to Latin America.*[1] For Duarte the Church is apart from the people; instead of acting as an integrating force it is alienated from the masses, especially the Blacks, who have created an alternative spiritual ideology to serve their needs.

One interpretation of the final scene of "The Given Word" is that the forcible entry of the crucified Ze into the Church is a revolutionary act, perhaps even the symbolic destruction of the "bourgeois" ideology of the Church by the "proletarian" consciousness of the masses. It thus could be seen as an echo of Lindqvist's thesis that the Church, at best, can only follow revolution in Latin America; it cannot make the revolution, and stands in danger of being swept away by it.[2] But Duarte's film is too imbued with cynicism and pessimism for this interpretation to

1) Tannenbaum, *Ten Keys to Latin America* (Vintage Books, 1962), pp. 53-65.

2) Lindqvist, Sven, *The Shadow: Latin America Faces the Seventies*, pp. 123-138.

be held unambiguously. He may be saying that, in a sick society, all ideologies are false consciousness and that all that is accomplished is but another absorption by the Church, no matter through what agency, of a potential threat to its authority. The doors close, the Church gulps a little and goes on with its business.

It may be helpful to recall that Ze's patroness, Saint Barbara, was supposedly a third or fourth century virgin martyr whose father had her locked up in a tower and then killed for being a Christian. She was as much a prisoner of her faith as is Ze. And, Duarte seems to be saying, so is the Catholic Church itself. Saint Barbara's father was punished for his crime by being struck down by lightning. Duarte offers us no clue as to what form, if any, such lightning might take in the unfolding of contemporary Latin American history.

Salt of the Earth

by David Garbeil

The film, "Salt of the Earth," is an excellent portrayal of the pain and suffering experienced by the working class under capitalism. The workers were not portrayed as a monolithic class; they were plagued with racial and sexual divisions which were partially overcome. The total transformation of the area from one dominated by Mexicans to one owned by a corporation was indicated by the transfer of the land from Ramón's grandfather to the Delaware Zinc Company. There were other hints at historical development in the film (Esperanza's comment, "Our story has no beginning."), but on the whole, this was a weakness in the film. The film was Brechtian in the sense that there was no final, permanent resolution of the conflict (company representative stated near the end, "I think we better settle this thing . . . for the present.) Again we hear hints of a future development (revolution, maybe), but it remains a whisper in the dark.

The development of the contradiction between the workers and the capitalists stems from the latter's unshakeable thirst for profit. This forces workers to unite in associations and organizations to keep from being reduced to a bare subsistence level. The trade unions are the basic organizational forms developed by the working class that enables them to reduce the competition amongst themselves to better battle with the capitalists. Thus, the film realistically unfolds as a running battle between the Mineworkers' Union and the Delaware Zinc Company.

For those unfamiliar with American history (and the present situation), Zinctown was a good introduction to the "Company Town." In such towns, a lone company is the employer, landlord, banker, shopkeeper, tax collector, judge, jury and hangman. Consequently, in Zinctown, Esperanza laments, "Even the house is not ours, only the flowers are." The real social relationships that exist in the capitalist mode of production are magnified a thousand-fold in such bodies. Using this as a model, the producers of "Salt of the Earth" ruthlessly smash such fantasies as the kindliness or generosity of the bosses. Moreover, in the larger society, the grip of gargantuan finance capitalists over the government is not clear. In the movie, there is no mystification of the police's role as we observe the policemen ordered by the Company representative to arrest picketing workers, harass the leaders and

generally act at the behest of the bourgeoisie.

As Zinctown is a model Company town, the anger and militancy of the workers flows from the situation. Grievances of the workers are many, but the dangers of solitary dynamite blasting are also evident. In this manner, the filmmakers focused upon issues other than the monotonous theme of the almighty "STRUGGLE FOR HIGHER WAGES." This is not to be interpreted as a denigration of this important struggle; simply, in and of itself, the struggle for a higher price for the commodity labor power is totally reformist and limited. The women had to deal with backbreaking housework, no running (let alone hot) water or basic sanitation services. This central aspect was thrust at us as we watched Esperanza chop wood and boil the water in order to do her laundry. Lest there be any doubt that life was intolerable, we are faced with Esperanza's prayer to God to be forgiven for sinfully desiring that her child die in her womb.

The film presents an accurate picture of the nature of racism. The workers' movement has been perpetually divided due to the privileged treatment given to certain sectors of the working class by the bosses. Thus, in the film, a worker explains how Anglos, seeing Chicanos in far worse shape, are encouraged to be quiescent with their slaves' "heaven." The Company had settled with all the Anglo locals but refused to take action to guarantee the safety of Chicano miners in Zinctown. Explosion . . . corpse . . . STRIKE!!

The depiction of the Company and all the Anglos associated with it as extremely racist may have been an accurate picture of bourgeoise attitudes then. However, the nature of racism has changed in an important aspect by acquiring the sugar coating of liberalism. Thus, I feel that the depiction of these racist reactionaries may have been correct in the past but represents a stereotypically distorted picture today. On the other hand, the trends towards acculturation and assimilation have developed to the point where some estimate that most Chicanos cannot speak Spanish. Nonetheless, I cannot criticize the film on these grounds. It was obviously a reflection of phenomena yet to disappear: a racially segregated community, inhabited by Chicano workers, battling with their Anglo employers. This is characteristic of many segregated American cities at the present.

An important criticism of Ramón was that he lumped all whites together, regardless of their class position. This is a valid criticism of many Chicano nationalists on this campus and throughout the nation. The solidarity communicated by all workers of every race was a factor that enabled the Chicano workers to emerge victorious. Unfortunately, I do not think this film developed this theme to the extent necessary. Instead, we see Ramón with a picture of Benito Juárez on his wall. Juárez was a leader of the bourgeois-democratic Mexican revolution. However, this is the era of socialist revolution and a picture of Ricardo Flores Magôn or Vladimir I. Lenin would have saved the film from the morass of trade-unionism and nationalism. Then again, it is an indisputable right of the filmmaker to present what he feels to be the most effective levers of change. Moreover, McCarthyism was on the rampage, blacklisting and harrassing many members of the film industry, including those that produced "Salt of the Earth." The film was not "legal" because it had not been vomited by Hollywood's wretched mind. Thus, we have come full

circle: if the producers of "Salt" could say what they wanted (being totally independent of the film industry and working underground), why then did they confine themselves to the struggle for democratic rights, which is totally confined to capitalist relations of production? I am not disparaging this struggle. As a Chicano, I realize the importance of equality. However, when the civil war between workers and capitalists rages and the existence of this enslaving system destroys billions of people, I think "good art" is that which serves to organize and strengthen the working class in this struggle.

The effect of sexism as a divisive force was, perhaps, one of the most important lessons of the film. The women developed from their total isolation in the home to leaders of the strike. Thus the strike (and, in the last analysis, the union) was saved. There was a fascinating role-switch as we observed women being teargassed, jailed, run over, brutalized and insulted by the police while the men cooked, took care of the children and did the housework. The changed conditions led to a change in the consciousness of the men and women. The men realized the validity of the women's demands, and the women realized the strength and power that had hidden in hibernation due to their subordination to the men. This was exemplified by the changing relationship between Ramón and Esperanza. Ramón, the leader of the men in the opening stages of the battle, was shunted aside into "women's work." It was a bitter pill. This led to Esperanza's emergence as a fighter, sure of herself and the abilities of her comrades. It was Esperanza who had the foresight to see the bosses' eviction move. Her warning brought Ramón back, crystallizing a new relationship on a much higher level—that of equality. The fundamental need for unity was hammered at time and time again.

End of the Revolution? and *Tupamaros*

by James R. Chamberlain

Revolution! No word can better convey the drastic changes which are needed in Latin America today. While much of the region staggers under the oppressive load of poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment, a select few still manage to live in conditions of unequaled wealth and luxury. In the urban slums and in the rural "campos" there exists a feeling that changes will have to come and, if they do not, the result will be revolution.

Nevertheless, "revolution" is a vague word and has been used to describe a wide variety of political and economic renovations. As Richard Gott's *End of the Revolution?* points out, Bolivia has had some 180 revolutions since the early 19th century and still the social system remains about the same as it was when the country first broke away from Spain. Even the "popular" revolution of 1952 failed to appreciably increase the average Bolivian's standard of living. If anything, it has been decreased. If revolution does come, what kind will it be and from whence will it come?

Both of these films attempted to come to grips with this question and, to some extent, their answers were about the same. A revolution, for it to be a success, must be the natural outgrowth of a widespread popular resentment against the institu-

tionalized forces of repression. As Lindquist's *Tupamaros* points out, a revolutionary group must offer an alternative political structure which "exercises power and administers justice." What is more, it must truly represent the people which it pretends to defend. Che Guevara failed in Bolivia, or so Gott seems to say, because he was a "foreigner" trying to institute an indigenous revolution and was, therefore, considered by many to be merely a troublemaker. In this regard, Gott's work skillfully juxtaposes the hero of the Cuban Revolution with the American Ranger, each of whom feels that he is helping Bolivia by ridding it of the other. President Barrientos, on the other hand, is quick to affirm that the country has already gone through a peasant- and worker-based revolution and that he is the head of it. All of these characters (even Che) seem to overflow with paternalistic intentions. The President is trying his best to care for the poor, the Ranger helps to train and protect his "little Indians," and Che's guerrillas ambush a patrol made up of these Indians in order to free others like them. This all seems quite futile.

Still, Gott does offer some hope in the form of Federico Escobar, the Bolivian communist martyr, whom he places as a symbol of the internal Bolivian forces of opposition against the government and the oligarchy. Also, in this regard, the film *Tupamaros* tries to show these revolutionaries as being the sons and daughters of the Uruguayan proletariat who simply cannot accept the system as it is now constituted. The black specter which appears and reappears before the colorful banner of the MLN is symbolic of this movement which, if unseen, is certainly quite vocal and active in its proposals and programs. The whole feeling one gets from *Tupamaros* is that they are indeed "indestructable." No prison can hold them and no "death squad" can stop them, for they really seem to be one with the Uruguayan people in general. Their relatively mild handling of political prisoners is played up in order to capture the sympathies of those who might oppose too brutal violence. They are just a part of the "people." As the film says in the beginning, behind any face could be a Tupamaro.

Oddly enough, their name is derived from a Peruvian, rather than a Uruguayan hero. Perhaps the fact that Túpac Amaru was a mestizo is symbolic of the need for unity between the races in the revolution. Throughout both films, race plays an important part in showing the social inequalities. President Barrientos is obviously white, while the miners are Indians. The rich of Uruguay are also of European ancestry, while most of the poor shown are darker skinned and often black. Since both films appear to be aimed at a foreign audience, this playing up of racial differences effectively catches the eye of persons who are accustomed to understanding racial prejudice. While in Bolivia this issue might be quite viable, it is somewhat questionable that race really forms a major part of the Uruguayan struggle. It is interesting that neither film really goes into great detail concerning the class nature of the two revolutions other than to show the very rich as being the exploiters of the poor. Both are aimed at grabbing a broad base for popular sympathy. Each touches more on issues of justice and oppression than upon the economic reasons for these. No real alternative system is proposed other than Indian-rule, perhaps, in Bolivia and rule by the Tupamaros in Uruguay.

The role of the intellectual in each film shows something of the orientation of

the two filmmakers. In *End of the Revolution?* Gott presents the French intellectual Regis Debray as almost being extraneous to the revolution itself. Most of the scenes of Debray's trial are aimed at the military, which does not understand that the French writer has really done very little harm to the government or to the oligarchs. To Gott, the Indian himself is the revolutionary, and the intellectual can only serve to describe what is going on in the struggle. Lindquist, on the other hand, sees the intellectual at the heart of the revolution. The British Ambassador Jackson is shown describing the Tupamaros as being both intelligent and honorable. These are not the rabble from the streets, but persons of intellectual worth and character. This revolution has been well planned and organized. Indeed, organization is presented as being the key to the success of the Tupamaros. When some of their leaders are taken or killed, there will always be others to take their place. Perhaps it is this emphasis on the intellectual in *Tupamaros* which restricts the use of class distinctions in the movement. It must be remembered that Robin Hood, for all his proletarian goals, was still a person of noble birth. Such persons, Lindquist seems to be saying, should not be alienated from the revolution.

In the techniques employed in each film to create visual and aural impressions, a tendency can be seen toward the use of comparison and contrast between the rich and the poor and between the government and the revolutionaries. The still action snapshot of the dead Che find their counterparts in the corpses of those killed by the Uruguayan "escuadrones." The whole theme of these shots is that of violence as a response to violence. "Bullet for bullet, death for death" is presented as the government's reaction in both cases. Thus, the final outcome for both movements is continued struggle and death.

Today, both Bolivia and Uruguay are under the rule of repressive military-based dictatorships. Che Guevara is only a passing memory to many Bolivians as one of many who have failed to bring change. The Tupamaros have also proved to be quite destructible. They may very well be completely destroyed by now. Even recourse to change through the "democratic" process is now gone. Perhaps Sven Lindquist's pessimism as to the chance of a revolution taking place in Latin America is correct. Maybe the forces of counter-revolution are too strong to win the struggle today. Still, to say that the era of revolution has come to an end would be a grave mistake. Although the persons about whom these films were made are now dead, the pressures which brought about their rebellion remain. The oligarchs and the military can only temporarily refuse to give heed to these needs and then at the peril of their systems of government.

Reformist militaries and modernizing elites are beginning to crop up in Latin America in order to moderate the past effects of injustice. If these are successful, then at least some revolutions can be aborted. If they fail, however, then Latin America is in for more violence and struggle. The examples of Peru and 1952 Bolivia would suggest the latter of these outcomes to be the most probable in the near future. Reformism can usually only be used for limited periods of time, after which violence again returns.

Both Gott's and Lindquist's final frames carry the cry for future revolution. One cry is bitter and real, the other lyrical and idealistic. One cry is constant and

plaintive, the other forceful and insolent. The governments of Latin America would do well to heed the first of these cries before they are forced to receive the wrath of the second. Their's is the next move.